

John S. Seeds House II
204 Coleridge Avenue
Llysven Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5879

HABS
PA
7-ALTO.
147-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN S. SEEDS HOUSE II

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Location: 204 Coleridge Ave.

Date of Erection: 1925

Description: This narrow one-and-a-half-story, side-gable bungalow relies upon contrasting banding in the gabled dormer and an emphasized porch beam connecting widely spaced battered brick columns for its horizontal interest. Both the wide cottage window and the band of three double-hung sashes in the dormer have upper sashes divided into vertical glazing, typical of bungalow design. Segmental arches top both the cottage window and the unelaborated entry. The first story has a textured brick veneer, with wood shingles above and in the dormer. The porch steps, piers, and closed rail are all of brick.

History: Built in 1925, this house exemplifies the kind of individualistic speculating and development that characterized much of Llyswen's growth from the late 1910s into the mid 1920s. The lot is a portion of a larger plot of land purchased by James A. Doyle, a boilermaker for the PRR, in 1907 for \$1,000. Doyle's property fronted 195' on Coleridge Avenue and 159' on Wordsworth Avenue. He subdivided in 1912 and sold a lot with 67 feet of frontage on Coleridge Avenue for \$585. Four years later Walter Bell, an inspector for the PRR, paid \$450 for that lot. Bell had originally built a bungalow at 211 Coleridge Ave., then built another with a plan he liked better at 205 Coleridge Ave. and sold the first. He then sold this lot across the street from his new home to Walter Seward, Logan Township tax collector, for \$750 in 1921. Seward lived at 110 Coleridge Ave. and regularly speculated in vacant properties in the neighborhood. He turned a tidy profit on this one, selling it to John S. Seeds in July 1924 for \$1,200. Seeds, a real estate broker who lived in Ant Hills, was also treasurer of Altoona Brick Company and a small-scale developer. In the mid 1920s, in addition to other projects in various parts of the city, he bought several lots along Coleridge Avenue, divided them in half, and built mirror-image bungalows on the half-lots, with no room for garages or driveways. Eventually he built more than a dozen houses in Llyswen, all of them on subdivided lots. This house at 204 Coleridge Ave. was probably completed by October 1924, when Seeds sold it for \$8,200 to Ross Stiffler, a postal clerk. The bungalow next door at No. 204A sold in March 1925 for \$8,400. Seeds also built bungalows of this design at 215 and 215A Coleridge Ave. From 1927 to 1944, No. 204 Coleridge was owned and occupied by J. Leroy Gruver, cashier of the First National Bank of Juniata, and his wife, Ruth. In the 1940s the house changed hands several times, and sold for \$10,800 in 1959. The current owners acquired it in 1968. (See John S. Seeds House I, 801 Lexington Ave., First Ward, HABS No. PA-5812)

Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 176/290, 208/652, 241/354, 317/700, 323/352, 327/58, 362/607, 501/543, 529/473, 560/422, 762/539, 876/271.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.